Several measures such as providing financial support for combating Left Wing Extremist activities sharing of intelligence inputs and providing assistance of Para Military Forces on a need basis etc. are undertaken by the Central Government. Steps have also been initiated to provide some funds from the Central Government for development of the LWE affected districts.

Cultivation of opium and Cannabis in India

2858. SHRI R. P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a recent report of the United Nations International Narcotics Control Board for the year 2002 expressing concern on the *vide* spread illicit cultivation of opium and cannabis in India, especially in Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh which might retard the long term economic development in these regions; and

(b) if so, the details of steps taken to combat the illicit cultivation of these drugs and also for crops substitution in the affected States?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI HARIN PATHAK): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. In India, there is no large scale organized cultivation of illicit opium and cannabis. The country is traditionally a licit cultivator of opium poppy, which is grown in Central India under the close supervision of the Government. However, illicit cannabis cultivation has been reported from some inhospitable areas of the country Regular surveys are conducted to identify such cannabis cultivations which are promptly destroyed and action initiated against the persons involved in such activities. The States of Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh have been addressed by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) to constitute Coordination Committees under the Chief Secretary for drawing up an Action Plan for eradication of illicit cultivation and wherever necessary preparation of plans for crop substitution and alternative development.